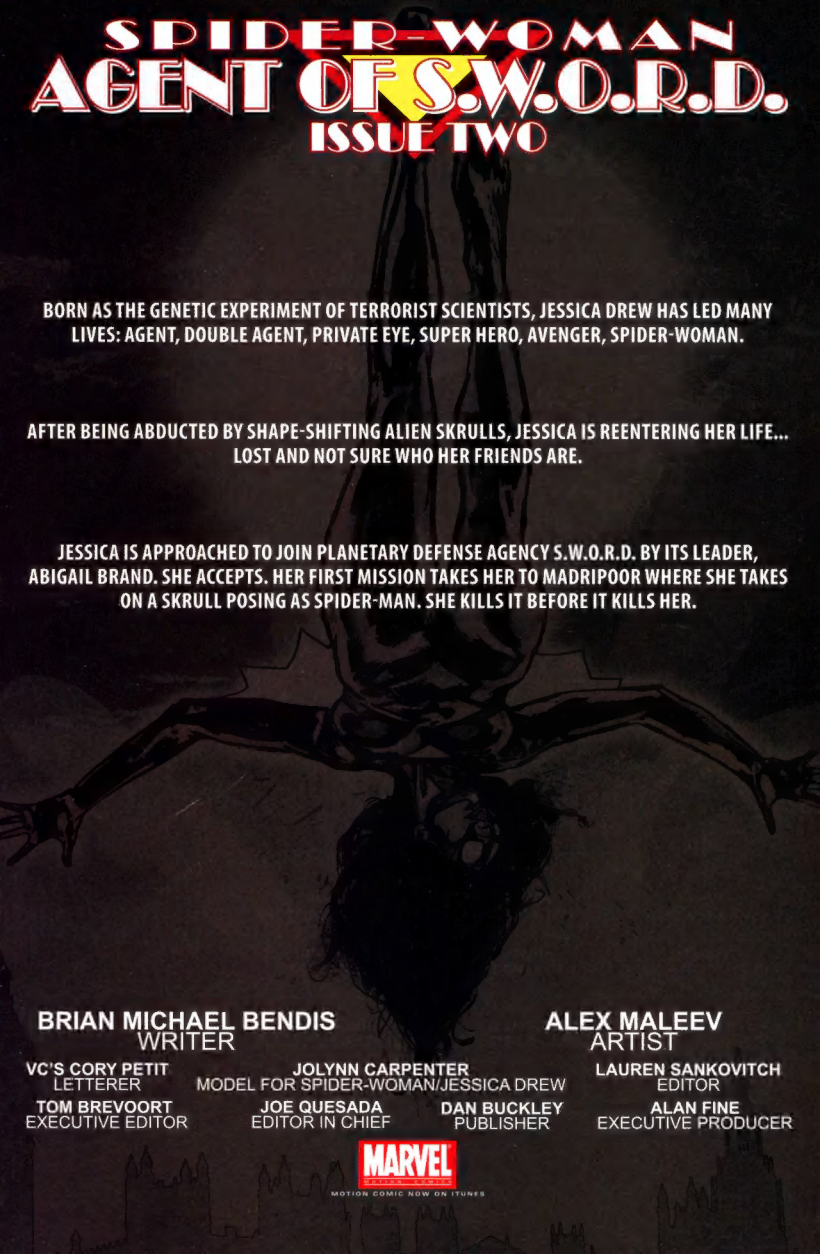
SPIDER-WOMAN
AGENT OF S.W.O.R.D.
ISSUE TWO



BORN AS THE GENETIC EXPERIMENT OF TERRORIST SCIENTISTS, JESSICA DREW HAS LED MANY LIVES: AGENT, DOUBLE AGENT, PRIVATE EYE, SUPER HERO, AVENGER, SPIDER-WOMAN.

AFTER BEING ABDUCTED BY SHAPE-SHIFTING ALIEN SKRULLS, JESSICA IS REENTERING HER LIFE... LOST AND NOT SURE WHO HER FRIENDS ARE.

JESSICA IS APPROACHED TO JOIN PLANETARY DEFENSE AGENCY S.W.O.R.D. BY ITS LEADER, ABIGAIL BRAND. SHE ACCEPTS. HER FIRST MISSION TAKES HER TO MADRIPOOR WHERE SHE TAKES ON A SKRULL POSING AS SPIDER-MAN. SHE KILLS IT BEFORE IT KILLS HER.

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MARVEL
MOTION COMIC NOW ON ITUNES

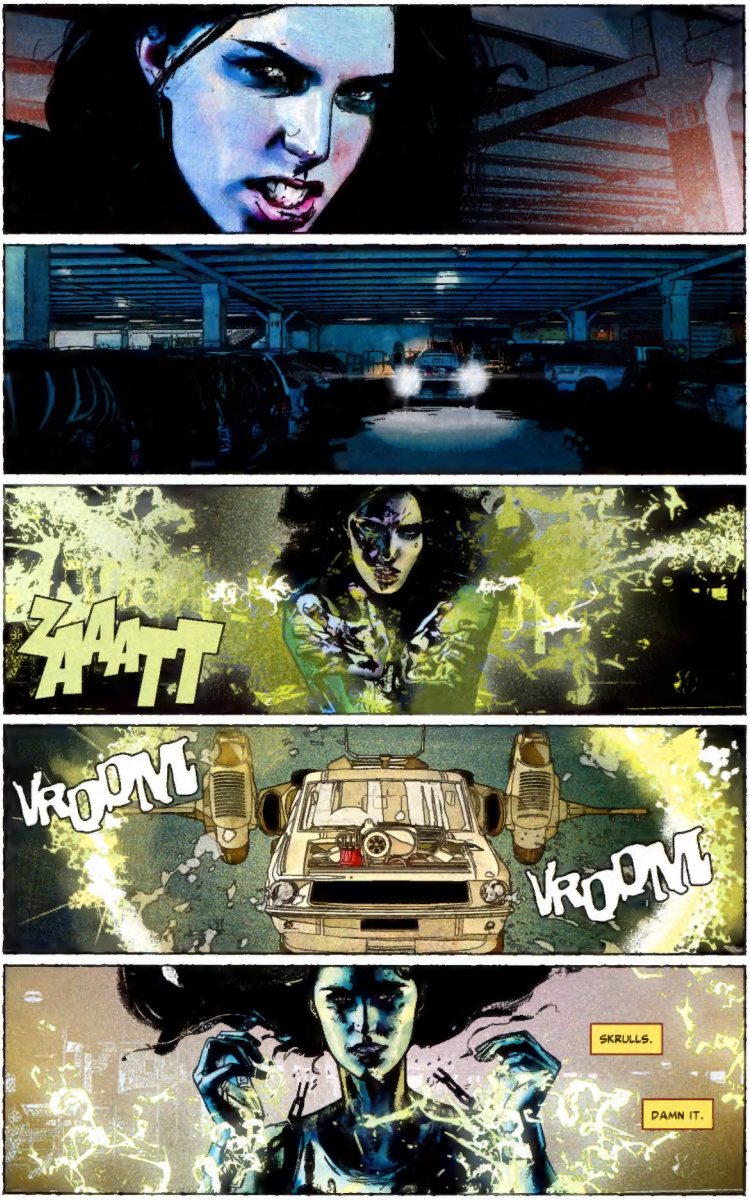
HELLO?
COME ON, BIG SHOTS. SHOW YOURSELVES.
HELLO?
WONDER IF I KILLED THAT SKRULL.
KINDA THINK I DID.
WONDER WHO ELSE SAW THAT I DID THAT... WONDER IF THEY KNOW WHO I REALLY AM.
OH, BUT NOW YOU'RE PROBABLY SAYING TO YOURSELF:
ISN'T SHE SOME KIND OF SUPER HERO WITH SUPER-POWERS?
ISN'T SHE SPIDER-WOMAN?
CAN'T SHE BREAK HERSELF OUT OF THIS?
YES, I CAN. I SWEAR.

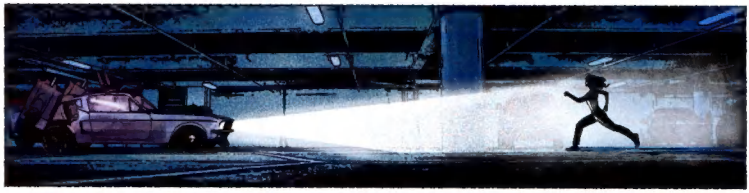
BUT THAT KIND OF THING ISN'T ALWAYS THE SMART MOVE.
ANOTHER LIFE LESSON LEARNED THE HARD WAY.
BUSTING OUT OF HERE WON'T GET ME WHAT I NEED TO KNOW.
HELL-LOO!!??
CHLINK CHLINK CHLINK CHLINK CHLINK CHLINK CHLINK
CHLINK CHLINK CHLINK CHLINK CHLINK CHLINK CHLINK
I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO THE MANAGER.

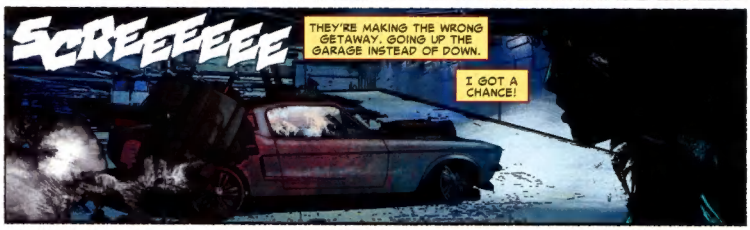
COME ON! COME ON COME ON!!
YOU'RE LOOKING AT ME. I'M LOOKING AT YOU. I'M LOOKING AT YOU LOOKING AT ME.
YOU'RE IN A HUDDLE WITH YOUR CAPTAIN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THE BEST WAY TO WORK ME OVER IS.
READ MY FILE. I'M AN EX-AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. I'M AN EX-AGENT OF HYDRA.
SWEATING ME OUT ISN'T GOING TO WORK. I'VE *BEEN* TO THIS DANCE.
HEY. THE DANCE I'VE BEEN TO WOULD GIVE YOU NIGHTMARES.
JUST GET IN HERE AND LET'S GET THIS--
I SPEAK ENGLISH.
GREAT.
GREAT.

I'M JUST SCARED.
THIS IS SOMETHING I DON'T LIKE TO TELL A LOT OF PEOPLE ABOUT.
IT'S SOMETHING I CAN DO.
IT'S A POWER I HAVE.
EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE OKAY.
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING. I'M--I WAS ATTACKED.
I KNOW, I KNOW...
WILL YOU HELP ME? CAN YOU GET ME OUT OF HERE?
MY CAPTAIN-- HE MIGHT BE WATCHING.
AND YOU'RE SAYING TO YOURSELF, HOLD ON.
HOW IS THIS HAPPENING NOW?
ONE MINUTE YOU'RE BEING INTERROGATED BY A COLD AUTOMATON AND NOW HE'S ABOUT TO FAINT FROM THE SIGHT OF ME.
CAN YOU BRAINWASH PEOPLE? NOT REALLY.

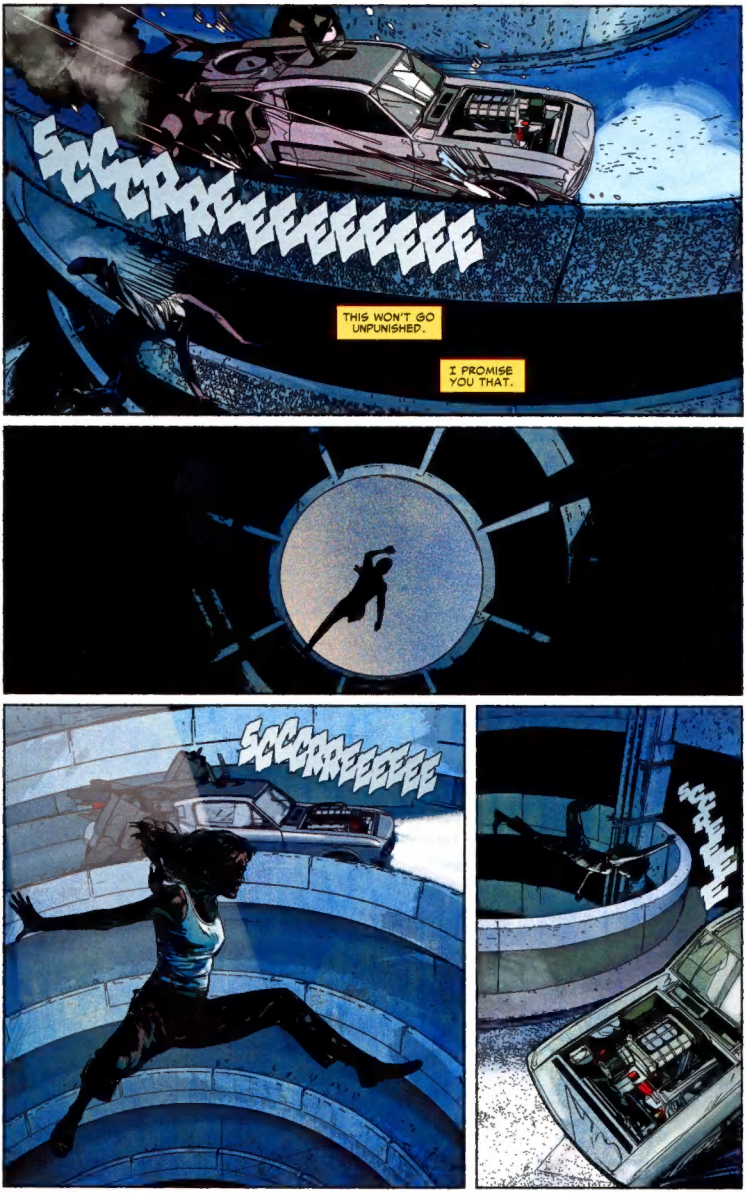
BAM


ZAAATT
VROOM
VROOM
SKRULLS.
DAMN IT.




SCREEEEEE
THEY'RE MAKING THE WRONG GETAWAY. GOING UP THE GARAGE INSTEAD OF DOWN.
I GOT A CHANCE!

NEED MY WATCH AND PHONE.
CAN'T CHASE SHAPE-SHIFTERS WITHOUT THEM.
UGH.
I'M SO SORRY, COP.
I REALLY AM.

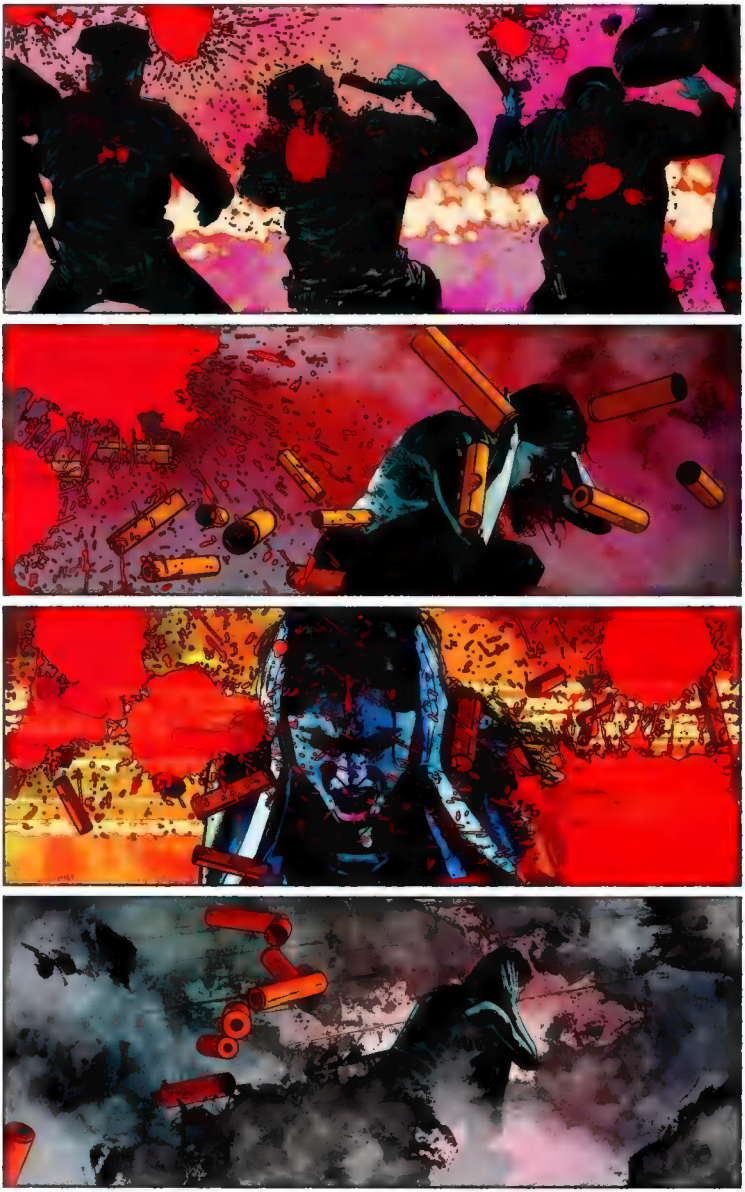

SCCCRREEEEEEEEE
THIS WON'T GO UNPUNISHED.
I PROMISE YOU THAT.
SCCCRREEEEEE
SCCEEEEE

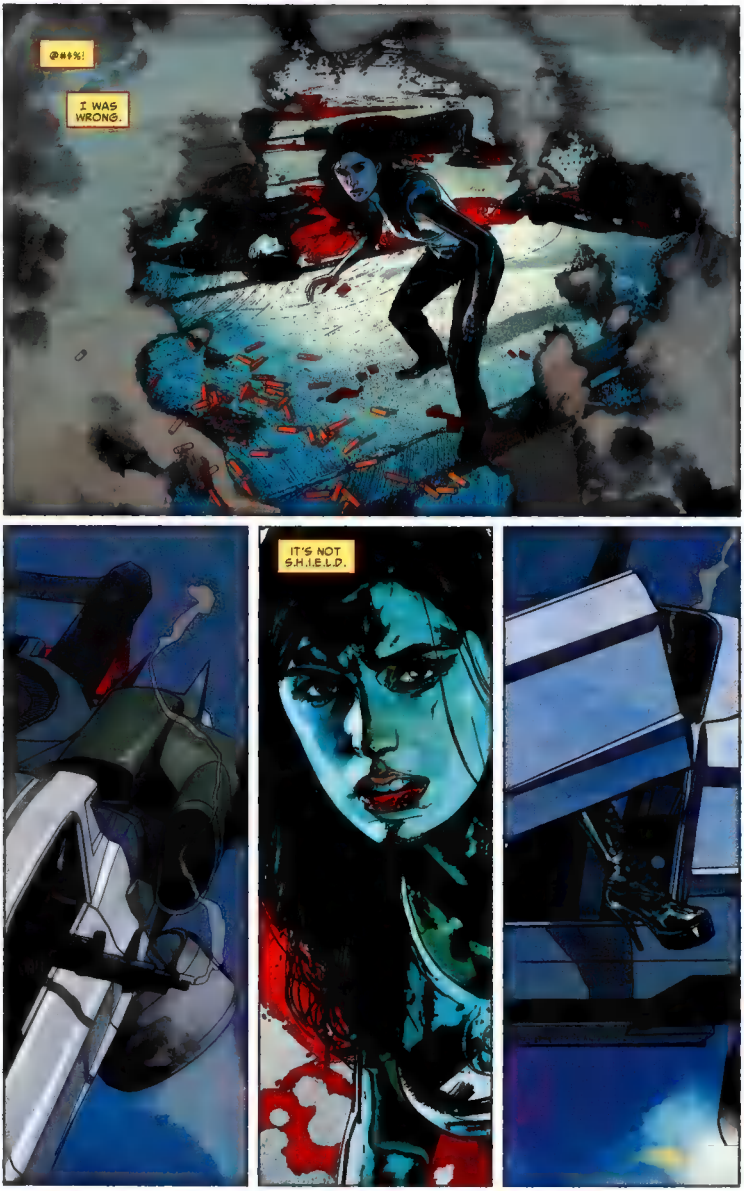
ZAAATT
SCCCRREEEEE
ERT
VROOM
VROOM

SCREEEEE
OH.
VROOM VROOM
I WAS WRONG.
THAT'S NOT A SKRULL.

THAT'S S.H.I.E.L.D.
FLYING CAR RUNNING FROM AN ASSASSINATION IS DEFINITELY S.H.I.E.L.D.
(POLICE! FREEZE!!)
(ON THE GROUND!!)
(COP KILLER!!)
(ON THE GROUND!!)
(DO NOT MOVE!!)
(ON THE GROUND!!)
WELL... ■!+%!
(YOU!!)
(HOW THE HELL--?)
(DAMN IT!! THIS IS 544 ON THE ROOF. WE NEED BACKUP!!)
(FLYING CAR??)
(ON THE GROUND!!)
(FLYING CAR??!!)

BUDDABUDDABUDDA




@#!%!
I WAS WRONG.
IT'S NOT S.H.I.E.L.D.

IT'S HYDRA.
COME GIVE MOMMA A HUG...
TO BE CONTINUED...

BENDIS TALKS SPIDER-WOMAN

by Dave Richards, Staff Writer, ComicBookResources.com

This story was originally published Wed., August 19th, 2009

Imagine being kidnapped, held hostage and, when you're finally rescued, you come back to discover someone else has lived your life while you were gone. And to make matters worse, what if their actions have made you the face of a horrible atrocity? What would you do?

Writer Brian Michael Bendis and artist Alex Maleev answer these questions in *Spider-Woman*, their new ongoing series from Marvel Comics. CBR News spoke with Bendis about the series, which [premiered August 19] on iTunes as a digital motion comic, with the print version [on sale] in stores now].

During Marvel's Secret Invasion event, it was revealed that several years ago, Jessica Drew, the title character of *Spider-Woman*, had been replaced by Queen Veranke, the leader of a force of shape-shifting Skrulls out to take over the Earth. When *Spider-Woman* begins, Drew is back on Earth and trying to make sense of the life that was stolen from her.

"Jessica is now lost in the Marvel Universe," Bendis told CBR News. "Every relationship she had has been altered dramatically from where she left it. Whether they be good or bad, all her relationships have moved forward without her. She's very lost and Agent Brand from Joss Whedon's run on *Astonishing X-Men* comes to her and offers her the position as one of, if not the only, agent of S.W.O.R.D. [Sentient World Observation and Response Department] operating on Earth. She gives Jessica judge, jury, and executioner powers and tasks her with missions that deal with many of the alien threats that plague the post-Secret Invasion Marvel Universe. She's to do these missions quietly and viciously if need be, and Jessica is perfect for these assignments because she's pissed.

"She gets to hop all over the world exploring the underbelly of the Marvel U not just in New York, but everywhere else," Bendis continued. "A lot of the first arc takes place in Madripoor, which is a place I've never been to, writing-wise. So Alex gets to develop a really fantastic Southeast Asian look to this amazing place with all these little stories in it."

Spider-Woman opens with a Skrull-based storyline and will feature a significant amount of paranoia and creepiness, but readers shouldn't think of Spider-Woman as the Fox Mulder of the Marvel Universe. "It's not 'X-Files' because it's not a question of whether there are aliens and what are they up to. We know there are aliens. It's more, where are the aliens and what is Jessica going to do when she gets there?" Bendis said. "The paranoia is very rightly Jessica's. How will she deal with what she's been through?"

While Agent Brand may have a presence in *Spider-Woman*, the series won't have any real connection to the recently announced *S.W.O.R.D.* ongoing series, which stars Brand. "That series is more intergalactic, while this is more Earth-bound," Bendis explained. "What's interesting about *Spider-Woman* and *S.W.O.R.D.* is how different in tone they'll be. This is much more gritty and noirish, almost like *Alias* and my other work with crime comics."

In addition to Agent Brand, a multitude of Marvel characters like the New Avengers and Carol Danvers also play supporting roles in *Spider-Woman*. "One of my favorite comics of all time is *Avengers Annual* #10, which has Jessica Drew saving Carol Danvers," Bendis said. "She was as lost as Jessica is here. So there's kind of a flip side to their relationship."

It won't be just friends and allies that play supporting roles in *Spider-Woman*. Early episodes of the motion comic and print series feature appearances by antagonists and adversaries like the Thunderbolts and Viper. "This series also explores Jessica's really [messed]-up relationship with Viper, who at one point thought she was Jessica's mother," Bendis said. "It's like you come back from vacation and the first person who calls you is the person you least wanted to talk to."

The appearance of the Thunderbolts in *Spider-Woman* means the series will be tied to the current

events of the Marvel Universe, like Norman Osborn's Dark Reign. "If the Thunderbolts show up there's a pretty big chance that Norman is aiming for her as well. She can't be bouncing around without his say so," Bendis stated. "This series is in continuity and matters. The events of the motion comics and print issues will affect what's going on in *New Avengers* particularly, since Jessica is a member of that team."

Bendis continued, "What I'm most proud of though is that at the same time, this series stands on its own. If you didn't read Secret Invasion you'll still know exactly what's going on, and if you've been reading your stuff and want to find out about the next chapter in Jessica Drew's life, this is it. It's a hyper version of what Jessica Drew has always been about. She's always been stuck between things like the fact that she was both an agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. and HYDRA. She's always stuck in the middle and a lot of that has to do with things that happen to her as opposed to things that she's done. In the story we say that she was the damaged spawn of two terrorists. She kind of started in the hole and to find herself back in the hole is pretty heart-wrenching, I think. So hopefully you'll be rooting for her to dig herself out again; to figure out who her friends are and where she belongs."

In the *Spider-Woman* motion comic, Jessica Drew's investigation into alien threats and who she is will be brought to life by not just moving images, but audio aspects as well, which include a full voice cast for all the characters. "It's a full audio experience for sure. We cast all the actors ourselves and helped direct them to get things where they needed to go," Bendis said. "And from there, Alex's amazing graphics were aided by Motherland, the production house that did all the audio and visual production.

"What's interesting about this whole motion comic situation is that there are no rules. It's not animation, it's not standard comic book fare, and it's not an audio book. It's hopefully the best all these things have to offer in creating an emotional connection to the reader/viewer."

Jessica Drew [claimed many places as home over the years]. As such, figuring out just what she should sound like was challenging. "Jessica was born in England, lived in Europe and then San Francisco for a long time. So how thick is her accent and what does it sound like?" Bendis said. "We really think we found something and as soon as people heard her voice in the trailer they were like, 'She's British?' Just because she doesn't talk like Dick Van Dyke in *Mary Poppins* going, 'ello' or 'bloody hell' doesn't mean she doesn't have an accent. It's slight. She's lived in America for a long time."

On average, each episode of the *Spider-Woman* motion comic will run around ten minutes. "A lot happens in those ten minutes. They move really fast," Bendis stated. "The printed comic book will be a little more literate as far as being in Jessica's mind and getting her perspective. I think it will be interesting for people to see the differences of what works as a motion comic and what works in print. There are large chunks of monologue that we don't need in the motion comic just because we wanted to keep things moving, whereas the print version is a more intimate

experience so we're in her head a lot more. There are visual differences as well. There's art in the print version that you won't see in the motion comic and vice versa. These are adaptations of the same story but there are a lot of differences."

Bendis and his collaborators also wanted to give something extra to *Spider-Woman* fans looking to experience both forms of the story, print and animated. "The whole point of this project was that it was supposed to be a motion comic, not, 'Here's the comic and look it wiggles.' It was very specific. The motion aspects were very important," Bendis explained. "Then it's me and Alex taking the same material and creating a comic book specifically to be a comic book. I think that was the best way to honor both audiences; to really make sure that everyone is getting something specifically created for the emotional impact we're hoping to get from *Spider-Woman* in that medium."

Bendis knows there are some people who are wary of purchasing the *Spider-Woman* motion comics, but the writer thinks if those fans give the series a chance, they will be rewarded. "We're trying something new and I'm curious to see people enjoy the merits. I think by episode three, which is the best episode so far, that even people who are confused by the idea might find themselves sucked in. I love that I can look people in the face and say that as good as episode one is, episode three is fifty times better from my point of view."

Regardless of whether fans pick up the animated or print versions of *Spider-Woman*, Bendis is sure they'll enjoy the artwork of Alex Maleev. "This is the best work of Alex Maleev's life," the writer said. "It's nice to sit back and introduce more great Alex Maleev artwork to the world."

Fans who pick up the introductory chapters of *Spider-Woman* should sit back and prepare themselves for a long ride, because Bendis and Maleev have a huge list of stories they want to tell in the series. "I don't sign on to a book unless I can go the distance and I've certainly created a feeling that I can do that," Bendis said. "I've been on the *Avengers* for a long time and on *Ultimate Spider-Man* longer than anybody who's done anything else at Marvel. Once you've established yourself as the guy who does that, you want to make sure you go the distance. So I'd like for *Spider-Woman* to go as long as possible. I have a laundry list of things I want to do with the character and long list of aliens in the Marvel U that I want to pit her against."

"I'm also focused on getting this thing out the door," Bendis continued. "It's been a long time coming. Before I was on *Ultimate Spider-Man* I was hired to write a *Spider-Woman* series, which died before it hit the stands. So I want[ed] *Spider-Woman* #1 out there like you wouldn't believe."

NEXT ISSUE

SPIDER-WOMAN (ISSN #1946-7796) No. 2, December, 2009. Published Monthly, by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. APPLICATION TO MAIL PERIODICAL POSTAGE RATES IS PENDING AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. © 2009 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. $2.99 per copy in the U.S. (BCE #RI270027852) In the direct market. Canadian Agreement #40664033. **Printed in the USA.** Subscription rate (U.S. dollars) for 12 issues: U.S. $27.00; Canada $27.00; Foreign $39.00. POSTMASTER: SEND ALL ADDRESS CHANGES TO SPIDER-WOMAN, C/O MARVEL SUBSCRIPTION DEPT. P.O. BOX 110 NEWBURGH, NY 12550 TELEPHONE # (800) 217-9158 FAX # (845) 457-5029. subscriptions@marvel.com. ALAN FINE, EVP Marvel Publishing Division and EVP & CMO Marvel Characters, N.V. DAN BUCKLEY, Chief Executive Officer and Publisher, Pixar Animation & Digital Media. JIM SOKOLOWSKY, Chief Operating Officer. DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation. DAVID BOGART, SVP of Business Affairs & Talent Management. MICHAEL PASCIULLO, VP of Merchandising & Communications. JIM O'KEEFE, VP of Operations & Logistics. HAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology. JUSTIN F. GABRIEL, Director of Publishing & Editorial Operations. SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager. ALEX MORALES, Publishing Operations Manager. STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Vince Lovece, VP of Business Development, at vlovece@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 1-800-217-9158.

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